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THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

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EDITORIAL:

AN ENCOURAGING STEP

To those who cherish the distinctive qualities of our Icelandic national heritage, and who have worked for the preservation of the things of value in that heritage, there must surely come moments when doubt and discouragement make themselves strongly felt. Are we perhaps waging a losing battle—espousing a cause in which time is against us? Will another generation see the almost complete disappearance of those ties that bind us to that other and older national culture in which we have our roots?

However strong may be our misgivings at times, there are nevertheless moments also of genuine hope and encouragement, moments when we can feel confident that many things in our Icelandic heritage will endure for years, perhaps even for generations to come. Such a moment of hope occurred a few weeks ago. The occasion was the annual banquet of the Icelandic Canadian Club in Winnipeg. Filling an entire table at this gathering was a group of young people who have recently formed an Icelandic Students' Association. An article describing the formation of this club—its aims and objectives—appears elsewhere in the pages of this magazine. These aims and objectives represent so admirable an expression of the principles for which the Icelandic Canadian stands that we cannot but feel particularly encouraged by this development. For here is a positive indication that many of those worthwhile elements in our Icelandic heritage which we have striven to preserve—our literature, songs, folk-dances,

etc., will also be fostered by those who follow after us. The work of the more senior members of our Canadians of Icelandic descent will, in the long run, be of little avail unless our younger Icelandic Canadians show an equal desire to foster those same elements in our Icelandic heritage which will, we believe, help to enrich our Canadian cultural pattern. We now know that the desire and interest are there, and we are heartened by the fact.

Let us take this opportunity of adding our words of encouragement to this undertaking. In an age where conformity is all too widely regarded as an un-mixed virtue, it is refreshing to see our youth placing such value on that which is distinctive in their heritage.

This young organization has made an excellent beginning. Already some encouraging steps have been taken. It will be noted, for example, that in the statement of policy the hope is expressed that provision be made for the awarding of scholarships to students who have shown promise and achievement in their pre-university studies. To at least a partial extent this has already been achieved. The foundation has been laid for at least two scholarships of \$100 each, which will be awarded to students graduating from high school and entering the University of Manitoba or one of the affiliated colleges. The Gudrun Norman Scholarships are an excellent example of the results that may be expected. All five recipients of that scholarship have had a distinguished scholastic record at the University. Four of them elected

take Icelandic as one of their optional subjects.

All of these evidences of interest by our younger Icelandic Canadians in the culture of their forefathers can be look-

ed upon as a most satisfying sign. We wish the Icelandic Students' Association all success in their activities, and feel sure that the future is in good hands.

—Gustaf Kristjanson

In The Editor's Confidence

AN APOLOGIA

To err is human. And he who errs should frankly admit it even though extenuating circumstances may be present.

As the blame is entirely mine there must be a departure from the general rule of this magazine not to use the capital "I". In my brief sketch in the Winter 1959 issue of the magazine, on John Lawrence Thompson, winner of a \$10,000 Ford Foundation Foreign Area Training Fellowship, I inadvertently stated that he was "the son of the late Norman Thompson . . . who died seven years ago". It was the grandfather who had died seven years before.

As I sincerely tender my apology I am glad to be able to report, in the words of his wife, that Norman Thompson, "is an active, healthy and very busy business man".

Now that Norman Thompson's recorded demise of seven years has been eradicated, it is only fair to him and his wife to draw the attention of our readers to one more laurel wreath with which their son has been crowned. On graduation from Princeton University John Lawrence Thompson was awarded a Phi Beta Kappa, the highest honor awarded to a student in the Liberal Arts College in American Universities. It is granted only to outstanding students, perhaps the top five per cent. The award means election to Phi Beta Kappa, the oldest scholastic honorary society in America, and the recipient

receives a gold insignia, the Phi Beta Kappa key.

My sincere apologies.—W. J. Lindal

★

RECIPROCAL EXCHANGES

A number of years ago this magazine adopted a policy of reciprocal exchange of articles and other literary material from Iceland with similar articles or material written here and sent to Iceland. As a result articles, poetry, etc., from Iceland have appeared periodically in this magazine and similar material from here has appeared in newspapers and magazines in Iceland.

Sermons preached in Iceland or here are in the same category. They provide a pattern of approach slightly different to what obtains in the other country.

We welcome the opportunity of publishing a sermon by Rev. Halldór Kolbeins. His congregation is in the Vestmanna-Islands, a few miles south of Iceland.

★

An innovation is made this time in having a picture on the front cover. Many subscribers have the magazine bound hence the picture appears again in the reading material.

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THE PROGRAM OF WINTER WORK

During the last month or two we all have read or heard about the annual winter work program jointly sponsored by the federal government

with provincial and municipal governments.

It has been estimated that in Canada over 300 million dollars are lost in wages and salaries due to seasonal layoffs from December to April. This loss if no counteracting steps are taken, will increase because the population of Canada and hence the labour force, is increasing rapidly.

In the field of repair work the greatest strides can be made in lessening winter unemployment. The redeeming feature of most repair work is that it can be timed so as to fit in when many workers are otherwise idle. Here custom and tradition have to be broken down. As soon as spring approaches the housewife thinks of painting and decorating. This might just as well be

done in January and February. This coming spring most anticipated repair work can be postponed until next winter.

Some people may say: "There is nothing we can do?" There is one way in which we all can help. We can help in developing a strong public opinion behind those who are called upon to combat seasonal unemployment. This has its own reward. There is the satisfaction of having taken part in a campaign to lessen the evil effects of enforced idleness. In this way we are rendering a public service and in performing that service we are building ourselves into better citizens. Thus the handicap caused by the rigour of our climate actually may be turned into an asset.



SPRING



Spring, a comely maiden, curls her toes
 Upon a touch of warmth within her frame —
 A stirring of renewal of the force,
 Regeneration coursing through her veins.
 She rises from a couch of ease and rest
 To genuflect, and stretch her arms aloft,
 To yawn and gasp and greet advancing day,
 Rejoicing in health and strength and grace,
 To meet her lover Sol in glen and heath,
 Clandestine or overt in shameless turn
 Of active copulation and the means
 Of launching and maturing yet again
 Another generation, root to leaf,
 Of pulsing Life, in everlasting round.

—Bogi Bjarnason

IMPRESSIONS OF INDIA

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An address delivered by **Oscar Bjornson, M.L.A.**,
at the Annual Concert of The Icelandic Canadian Club, February 23, 1960.



Oscar Bjornson, M.L.A.

When asked to speak at this meeting of our people of Icelandic descent, I was very proud to accept the honour. I did want though to speak on something that would be interesting to them and it was suggested that as I had spent some years in India that that would be a fitting subject. The topic was so broad, however, that it was difficult for me to decide just how I should present it to the audience so that they could envisage this exotic country and its people in proper perspective. My thought was that possibly I could do it more justice by relating the incidents I had seen myself during my stay there, and explaining what an Icelander from Manitoba was doing on the other side of the world to help during World War II.

Let me explain that I was loaned by the Company I worked for to the Government of India War Department as a Technical Adviser. My duties were to assist this Government in any way possible in regard to the transport vehicles which were being sent over to India by the Governments of Canada and the U.S.A.

I was to meet the first Indian person I had ever known on board the ship that took us from Philadelphia

around the Cape of Good Hope to Calcutta. This person was the Maharaja of one of the larger states in India and I was very impressed by the kind and gentle manner in which he conducted himself. I spent many happy hours with this man, his wife and young daughter in ship board activities in the weeks it took to complete our journey. He was also accompanied by his aide-de-camp, a young and modern Mohammedan. It was somewhat of a shock to me to learn later that the Maharaja was the son of one of the cruelest rulers that India has ever known. Also to learn years later that the young Mohammedan absconded, during the partition of India and Pakistan, with three millions of rupees that were the property of his Hindu Master.

My introduction to Calcutta was to land me right into the midst of one of the biggest famines that the province of Bengal had ever witnessed. Not hundreds but thousands of homeless and starving people were roaming the country side without food or shelter.

They flocked by the thousands to the big cities for some relief and many thousands died on the way or dropped dead on the city streets. I was told that every effort was being taken to set up rice relief stations but that there were just too many people and too little rice. The daily newspapers printed the figures of the dead picked up in the streets and the numbers were horrifying. Hundreds and upwards of a thousand each day. The answer, when the question was asked as to how this horrible thing could come about, was that this was not the first famine experienced in India. When the monsoons failed the rice crop could not be sown and when there was a crop failure the people had to pay for it with their lives.

After some weeks in Calcutta I finally reached my ultimate destination, Bombay, and here I began the work I had been sent over to do. Strange to relate, the first job I was given, was to do something similar to what we are doing now in the Legislature. It was to help complete a bill which was to become law, to assist the Government of India to prosecute offenders operating in the sale of spare parts for cars and trucks on the black market. Although I say it was not an easy task, at least in some respects, it was pleasant in that I was able to work at it in an air-conditioned office which gave me time to become adjusted to the terrific heat. My only complaint was that it did not last long enough and I was soon boosted out of the air-conditioning to take charge of an ordnance depot and had to operate right out in the blistering heat. However, it did bring me in direct and intimate contact with some eight hundred persons from every part of the country. We had Hindus of every caste, Mohammedans, Madrasies, Marathas, Pun-

jabies, Ghurkas, and many others. I learned to work with these people and respect the dignity they have in their performance of even the most menial tasks. We had many people that were classified as Untouchables, the lowest of the Hindu castes. The saintly little man that was known as the father of India, Mahatma Ghandi, was the champion of these depressed people. He named them "Harijans", the children of God and it is now forbidden by law to practise caste discrimination. The rate of pay per day in the depot was from 35 to 50 cents for the ordinary help and slightly higher for the more skilled help. The annual wage per person was, if I remember rightly, in the neighborhood of \$52.00.

It was during the two years that I spent in the Ordnance Depot that we experienced that tragic event of the explosion of an ammunition-laden ship in the harbour. The explosion came in two separate blasts approximately half an hour apart. It rocked the city to its outermost limits. I happened to be visiting our office that day two miles away from the harbour. It shook the factory like a dog shaking a rat. Plaster fell from the walls and glass shattered in the windows. We had to dismiss all the employees as there was somewhat of a panic taking place. It was thought at first that the Japanese were bombing the city. Some of us went to the highest point in the city and looked down on a scene that it was not easy to imagine. The whole city seemed to be on fire at one time. The water front was ablaze from one end to the other. Sirens were screeching and bells were ringing everywhere. The results were truly disastrous. No true estimate of how many were killed or how much this cost in money has been made to this day. The fire burned through the storage shed

and grain go-downs for weeks and laid waste miles of sea front and burned three and four blocks into the city. I was able to get in beyond the police lines as I had a pass. Part of my work was to supervise unloading of material from America. The sights I saw that night kept me awake for many nights after the fire was under control. My little Hindu stenographer lost her husband in the explosion—only his head was found to identify him. I was very thankful that this was not the day I was to visit the docks. Some of you may have read the story of this event in the *Star Weekly* from Toronto, or may have heard it discussed on the T.V. program "Front Page Challenge" some months ago.

When the war in Europe was over, and it seemed not too long before the Japanese would surrender, I was assigned to a more or less peace time job in Madras. In my work I was to visit almost every village, town and city in this large area. I spent one of the happiest years of my life in India during this time and learned to appreciate that India was not made up of only the large cities but hundreds of little villages that were united in one thing, and that was to grow the food they needed for survival. In some of these small villages the majority of the people have never been further away in their lives, than possibly forty or fifty miles. They lead a quiet, peaceful life where the slogan is "I am not a slave of time . . . time is my slave". They are fundamentally kind, moral and generous.

I would not like to give you the idea that all is poor, depressed, and desperate in India. Far from it. The wealth of the world is in this strange land that is five thousand years old. It was truly said that it was the brightest jewel in the British Crown. They

do have their large and fine industries, there are the middle class who live comfortably, and there are people rich in property, jewels and money far beyond our imagination. Some of the states themselves are highly industrialized, they have good government and good roads as well as happy and prosperous citizens. One of these states that comes to mind is Gwalior. I was fortunate in visiting the city of Mysore during the period of Dassra. This is a combination, as far as I could make out, of the meeting of the legislature, the agricultural and farm fair, the blessing of the harvest and a time of feasting and rejoicing. The Maharaja invites his wealthy and influential friends from all over India. The palace, with its dome of gold, is lighted each evening with thousands and thousands of bright lights; the Maharaja rides out in state each evening in a golden howdah on a big elephant. I visited all these events and it was like living in a fairy land. Particularly so one evening when I was taken to a dam just outside the city where water was conserved and which had turned much of their desert land into farms. Beside the dam they had constructed a beautiful water garden copied after a similar one that the Maharaja had seen in Italy. Italians, imported for that specific purpose, built it. It was constructed in a series of steps with a water course through the middle. Fountains, sprays, and ripples were lighted at night to match the color and splendor of the beautiful flowers which grew along the sides. The walk ended in a breathtakingly beautiful lagoon, lighted in all the colours of the rainbow, where one could take a ride around the little lake if desired.

The Indian is a skilled craftsman in any manner of work in which he is trained. It is a thrill to see the carver

of ivory turn the tusk of an elephant into a beautiful statue. Or a potter make a water vessel on a whirling wheel with dexterity and rapidity out of a lump of clay. Or watch a fisherman at work with his little round net casting into the sea to harvest the fish and other marine edibles that he is seeking. Or to watch a coppersmith hammer out the intricate designs on platters or vases. To see the silver-smith manufacture the fine, lacey jewellery for which this country is famous. To watch the women making the strong and durable but fine lace cloths that one part of Madras is famous for. The skill is acquired only after years of practice and it is likely that the same family has been engaged in this same type of work for years, or even centuries, and has had it handed down from father to son and mother to daughter.

I do not think I am capable of giving you a picture of the beauty of the countryside with its trees of flaming red or the beautiful bouganville vines, or the many flowers that grow in profusion in certain seasons of the year. Or to take you for a trip in the mountains to a hill station, where you start in the heat of a hundred degrees or more and gradually come up to the end of the trip some thousands of feet and are happy to put on an overcoat and have a fire in your room. To watch the monkeys in the banyan trees and be entertained by their queer antics by the hour. To watch the farmer at work patiently tilling the little rice paddy fields with a bullock and a stick shoved through a tough beam to act as a plow, or to watch him laboriously plant the rice in the soil, plant by plant, by hand. Or to watch them harvest the kernels with a flat basket by tossing it in the air to get rid of the chaff after they have had most of

the straw separated by having their bullocks walk over the sheaves to get rid of most of the straw. It is a hard life but it is the kind of life they have had to lead through centuries past. In the trips you take around this strange country there is always something of interest right around the corner: temples, pagodas, fortresses, hundreds of years old; palaces of great beauty; the most interesting of people everywhere.

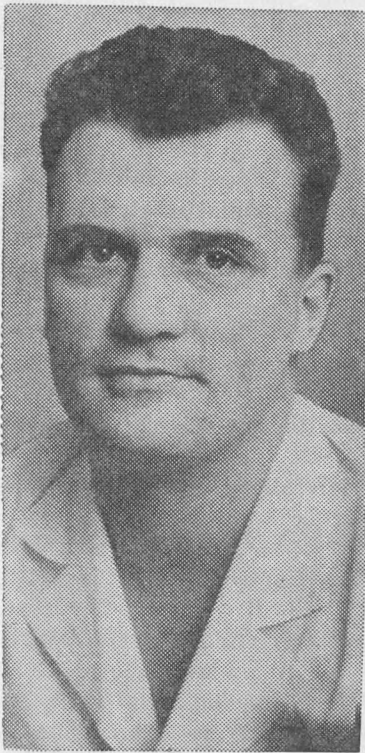
After the war I came back to India with my wife and daughter and I intended to live there for the rest of my life, but this was not to be. We were stationed in Calcutta when India proper and Pakistan were to be divided. This partition was not to be accomplished without a great deal of strife. Hindu against Mohammedan and many paid with their lives before the exodus of the people from one country to another was completed. In Calcutta, killings were no novelty. Twelve Sikhs were machine-gunned and killed when getting off a bus just a block away from where we lived. Our bearer discovered a dismembered body in our trash can, and it was my sad experience one Sunday afternoon to watch a man die at the gateway to our home. He had been slit up the stomach with a sharp knife. We watched him bleed to death and all we could do was pillow his head and wet his lips with water before he died. These were tense times indeed for everyone, and I can tell you it was with mixed feelings that I attended the celebration of our Indian employees in the compound of our factory when the British flag was hauled down for the last time and the flag of the new India was raised for the first time.

All this was but one more episode in a country which has seen so much of war, trouble and strife in the thousands of years of its history. It grieves

me deeply at the misunderstanding of so many people over here at home who have a pat answer to all the many difficulties of the Indian people. They make such trite remarks as "These people should be educated and their troubles will be over" or "These people should be taught birth control" and remarks of a like nature.. The remarks in some cases may be true, but, oh how hard to put into practice. India is now embarked on a brave scheme to the betterment of all its people. Let us give

all the help we can to them. I am proud of the contribution Canada has made in the past years, and I hope we will be able to do even more. There is a country to the far north of India that seems more than anxious to give money, medical supplies, technical assistance and other help. The country I refer to is Russia, but I hope that India will be able to solve its many problems and remain a free and independent country.

Winnipeg Doctor Awarded Major Fellowship



Dr. M. C. Hart, of the Childrens' Hospital in Winnipeg Manitoba, last

winter was awarded one of six annual fellowships granted in North America by the American College for Physicians. Only two other such awards have ever been received by city doctors.

Dr. Hart's name was forwarded to the College on the basis of research work in Winnipeg on cardiology.

The award is accompanied by a grant for research in medicine under the auspices of the college and Dr. Hart will work under Dr. Mark Nickerson, of the University of Manitoba's department of pharmacology. He will work in this field as it relates to pediatrics the subject on which he is specializing.

Dr. Hart will start work on this project in July 1960, and it will end in June, 1961.

Dr. Hart is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Hart. Mr. Hart's mother was Icelandic, and Mrs. Hart was formerly Miss Aida Hermansson, a well-known violinist.

SMOKE SIGNALS

An address delivered at the Annual Banquet and Dance of The Icelandic Canadian Club

by GISSUR ELIASSON

In casting about for a suitable subject for this evening's address, I was very much aware of two restrictions—the first being that I stay well within the 12 mile limit—the other condition being that whatever I said should be of such a palatable nature that it would lie well on a full stomach—something light and sociable—something that would neither fatten nor fill. Now every good Iclander knows that the only subject that can fulfill all these requirements is smoke which is composed mostly of hot air. So for the moment of truth that is so often associated with smoking, that freshness of spring, I would urge you to light up, relax and lend an ear to a few well chosen words about smoke signals.

Before coming to grips with this illusive topic, I would like to thank the committee for inviting me to participate in this program for I have always tried to attend these banquets in the past and have many very pleasant memories associated with them—I say with all sincerity that I deem it a great honor to follow the interesting and inspiring speakers we have heard on previous occasions, in fact I suspect that I remember the preceding speeches with more vividness than my own for so often have I thought upon them. For instance I well remember Rev. Robert Jack in a rare mood telling of his experiences in Iceland, about his dual personality there—sometimes as a Scotchman full of Icelandic but more often as an Iclander full of

Scotch—you will recall that he told us also something interesting about Drangey and his parish there—how at one time in its history its population had been reduced by plagues and pestilence to a mere handful of half starved souls and how through the energy and efforts of a young minister who came to the island soon after, the population had increased by leaps and bounds. Just when I'm feeling very happy about this achievement along comes a T.V. program where Julian Huxley and Sir Charles Darwin take a dim view of this sudden increase in the number of people being born today. But notwithstanding the pessimistic predictions of these distinguished prophets of gloom I think this young man did well and I wish he'd move to Iceland next, for you may not realize the fact that there are more people born in this tired old world of ours every 24 hours than the total population of Iceland which at last count was somewhat under the 170,000 mark. At this rate I'm afraid we're going to be badly outnumbered—a deficiency which we can only hope to make up in strength of character and high ideals as we have been admonished to do by so many of our speakers in the past. I am not certain whether I can add anything of value to our patriotic cause so if someone asks a year hence about this little talk of mine, it would have to be simply this, he spoke about smoke — —.

According to the most recent statist-

ical reports it can now be established that people fall roughly into two groups—smokers and non-smokers. The non-smoker who at one time was regarded as a rather frugal virtuous fellow is being frowned upon today in many quarters, for by not using the product that has given living wages to thousands of people growing tobacco plants, processing them and selling the stuff, he is endangering the economy of our country. But serious as this may be in itself, society looks upon the non-smoker with suspicion and even scorn for it is almost impossible to know how to classify him socially. How much easier it is to categorize the active smoker. In the olden days when the measure of a man was not his wealth but his money the type of smoking he engaged in was regarded as an unmistakable badge of his rank and file. If he were awfully prosperous and drove a shiny automobile, nothing less than an expensive cigar would do. If he considered himself a sportsman or a scholar, a straight-stemmed pipe and a pouch of Raleigh, (or what my dear fellow). If he were just an average middle-class man he was content with an average cigarette though towards the end he was beginning to long for a King size. If he were a cowpoke or a very poor civilian and didn't know where his next loaf of bread was coming from then he rolled his own and if he was a kid like I was at the time he would smoke bark or dry leaves because times were rather hard in the depression and the cigarette butts that were thrown away were really too short for smoking—the kids now-a-days have it better.

The Icelanders of old did not bother much with smoking, other than fish, *hangikjöt*, etc., for they preferred snuff—and while the Sagas do not make

specific mention of this for it was rather hush-hush—it is not unlikely that heroes like Egill Skallagrimson and his son Skalli made many of their trips to Denmark to replenish their supply of Copenhagen snuff which they found much to their liking and not to be sneezed at even in this day and age.

I don't suppose that it was until Leif the Lucky sailed from Smoky Bay (Reykjavik) to discover new lands that anything at all was known about the art of smoking in Iceland. This was in the year 1000 when many dangers lurked at sea but the one that he feared most was the great big boastful warship from whence blared the strains of "God who made thee mighty make thee mightier yet". This of course is ancient history and could not happen today, but there it was. However after a safe and uneventful journey he hit the eastern shore of America—somewhere in the Maritimes to be specific.

Just as he and his gay party had dug themselves in for the winter, as we are all accustomed to doing—he spied to his left a series of smoke clouds rising heavenward and while his first thoughts were that these must be more civilized spoutings of the old volcano Hecla, he soon discounted this possibility when he became aware of the deliberately punctuated pattern issuing forth.

This is not the work of nature he decided but the creation of man. If he had any fear he quickly conquered it as all heroes do and boldly strode towards the hills from whence continued to rise these strangely fascinating smoke patterns. As he drew nearer he observed that the smoke clouds became correspondingly more frequent and more agitated. With every approaching step the hostility and ominousness of the

smoke eruptions grew in tempo and intensity. He sensed that there was confusion in the backfield somewhere and that his own safety was being threatened. He decided then and there that discretion was indeed the better part of valor and discreetly hid himself in an ambush that grew conveniently nearby. But not a second too soon did he throw himself to the ground for out of nowhere an arrow flew at him and missed him by less than a cat's whisker. Now this is really why they called him Lucky and should you be wondering about the reason for all this confusion and shooting of arrows I should tell you that he had on this day decided to sport his Viking helmet with the horns on it, and it was this frightening sight that aroused the fighting spirit of the Indians. When he came to, he found himself seated at the head table between the Indian Chief and his daughter. Under these circumstances he hastened to assure them that he was truly their white brother and that his mission was one of peace and good-will. After this declaration, followed what is commonly known as the Pipe of Peace ceremony.

Now as this was Lucky's first attempt at smoking he became quite ill, one might even say after a similar personal experience that he became violently sick and very pale. The Indian Chief observing this change of color referred to him as Paleface, a name that has stuck to white-men ever since in the land of the Cree. Lief Erikson, of course, later returned to his native land with a handful of tobacco leaves and that's about all the thanks he got for discovering America.

Now at last I think we are ready to give more serious thought to the nature of the smoke signals from the

other sides of the mountain. We may correctly assume that these well calculated puffs of smoke were used as a means of communication by the Indians. By this system they were able to send messages much as we transmit telegrams to-day. Instead of our morse code of dot dash dot dash dash (a good commentary on modern life this with all its dashing about) the smoke signal consisted of puff-gap-puff-puff-gasp.

The first deduction we can safely make from this method of communication is this—that if its successful interpretation depended solely on its code or mechanics then it is certain that Leif the Lucky be he Iclander or Norwegian or even a blend of both, could not have read the message being sent for it represented a totally strange language to him. Fortunately he devined or sensed the urgency and impact from the code in the manner it was conveyed—the almost breathless frequency of the clouds of smoke, their density and punctuated explosive bursts. It was the form rather than the substance that revealed the situation—the spirit rather than the letter that revealed its real contents. The smoke that emanates from the fires that are kindled and tended by the dictates of human emotion, intellect and experiences always give off more telling signals than those rising from the detached coals of arbitrary traditional codes. Thus it is and has always been since time began that the works wrought by the heart, the head and hands of man have directly reflected the changing tempo of the time—the pulse of the social, economic and cultural condition of the society that has produced them. If we may equate the highest esthetic achievements created by man as works of art then we may say that art is not only a product of its

period but a mirror of the ages—the voice of silence that proclaims what man is and has been—the smoke signals of the contemporary fires that have burned within him.

When I speak of art, I think of all forms of human expression and communication tho' I feel that its greatness lies in the power of its expression and creation more than its ability to communicate. I think of music, for it was likely the first form of esthetic expression and the one abstract art form that can communicate through its pure esthetic terms—through its formal elements of sound and techniques. No one asks what does it represent, what it is about though to be sure it adds to its interest if we do know, but it isn't as dependent on its subject matter or title as a painting seems to be—I think of the dance, of literature and drama, of painting, sculpture and architecture. I find that it is through my interpretation of these that I would describe the rise and fall of the human spirit—of culture and civilization. I think this a more accurate chronology of men and nations than the documentation of battles, biographies and dates. I would listen and try to understand the signals from its sounds, I would look at the size and shape of the things that are created not just with the eyes but with the mind for we only look with our eyes but see with our minds. I would try to read the signs along the path of evolutionary progress—through gestures and attitudes through meaningful imagery and creative forms—through the books that men have written and the poems they have made and through the revealing styles of architecture. I would try to realize that environmental trends and changing circumstance cast the dyes in which the thoughts and

deeds of men are molded, and the new ages impose new symbols, new concepts and how difficult it is to read these in terms of the fading scene. Each anvil strikes its own sparks, which depend largely on the character of its metal and the manner in which it is forged.

It is true that we find the familiar more to our liking than that which is strange and unknown, and so we feel that its quality is superior and more valid and more significant. We say that we know what we like when we really mean that we like what we know. Familiarity and the limitation of our knowledge and experience reduces our appreciation of any thing be it considered a work of art or not to our own personal terms of reference, not always a reliable evaluation of the intrinsic importance of things. That is why the signals that are produced in the heat of the day are seldom correctly read until long afterwards and why so often recognition and rewards are posthumously offered.

Our preferences and our prejudices are therefore often steeped too strongly in what has been to focus sharply on the whirling tempo of the passing scene. In my own case I much prefer the leisurely pace and rhythmic grace of the old-time waltz to the frenzied beat of the jitterbug or rock and roll, but I realize that these new forms of dances are far more in tune with the tempo of the times than those heavenly beautiful waltzes. The new dances reveal many things—two of which might indicate that the dance is no longer basically an excuse for a man to put his arms around a woman in public and get away with it, and the other being that the female of the species has become much more energetic than the male and she it is that

twists and turns and surrounds the man who only seems to give a little kick now and again to show that he is still alive. I see the same thing happening in our super-markets where the lady leads and the gents follow as round and round with their carts they go. Seriously speaking I do feel that the character of the dance itself the go-as-you-please, do-as-you-like routine is very symptomatic of the trends towards the veering away from discipline and convention—the sharp break with tradition and formalities. The nervous excitement that spends itself in a furious outburst of vitality without too much regard for the consequences. Live life to its full for it's later than you think—living in this case meaning some fast and furious footwork.

Similar signals arise out of the other forms of contemporary art—in music, literature and drama we are confronted by new idioms, new sounds, new ideology, new madness, some say, though somehow I think not, for I look upon a modern canvas not against the background of the previous era but as a significant form freshly stamped by the synthesis of the present. It is an error to think that a canvas is the cause of the black clouds of unrest and uncertainty in this world as some believe, it is much more in line to believe that the black clouds of today cast their shadows on the screen, which for some reason seems to be more prone and sensitive to the chaotic turbulent disruptive forces than those of the shining hours which lie hidden somewhere in the fugitive, fluctuating formations. The canvas registers the movement of the supersonic missile streaking across the sky on its way to the moon and sees in the sinister black cloud of the atomic explosion the hard-handed mistress of necessity forcing overnight a revelation which religion and human-

itarian doctrines have preached with little success for at least 2000 years—the brotherhood of man—not for its own sake as would be desired but for its very survival. Time and Space are one and the world has shrunk into the size of a continent, and the universe into a world. The boundaries of east and west that have been maintained by the pride of man's distinction are now being removed by the fear of his extinction. The co-existence of Russia and the United States—the fact that two leering, fighting giants of opposing views have been forced to become bosom bedfellows through the imperative and inevitable expediency of economic survival and mutual benefits. The amalgamation nearest our hearts is undoubtedly the wedding of Logberg and Heimskringla — a sound move and an inevitable one under the circumstances, and while I rejoice at their union I find myself wondering about the changes in attitudes and values, in convictions and beliefs that have made this new marriage of expediency not only functional but logical—and I ask myself in this new currency of function and logic and mass survival what is the coin of human thoughts and convictions, individual beliefs and creative expressions worth and how much permanent value can be attached to them on a fluctuating market. How much of its importance is relative and subject to discounts according to the prevailing customs, caprices and circumstances.

In the swirling strokes and chaotic tensions created by a frantic, groping brush on a modern canvas with its inherent uncertain drifting suspensions in a state of flux, I see the terribly sincere, bewildered efforts of a creative mind trying to express in colours lines, images and shapes—the cosmic forces of the subjective world around him.

The problem consuming him being how to give tangible forms to these cross currents of changing values that blow hot and cold, from this direction and that—which are the mirages and which are the landmarks that endure.

In modern art as in our modern way of life their are hoaxes and cheap imitations by the score, many striving to be spectacular and sensational at the expense of truth and integrity much as the honesty of a Van Doren Quizz show is compromised and rigged for the sake of entertainment or the sham wrestling matches preferred over those that are real because they are more exiting. The shifting sands of the present scene have blurred the positive colours of yesterday to the point where black and white hardly exist only varying degrees of gray. The public mind and conscience has been thrown into a confusion of uncertainties to the extent that it cannot with conviction differentiate between what is and that which seems to be, between right and wrong, between the real and the vicarious, between the genuine and the phony.

The serious artist of today is nowise different from the creative artist of other days, except that he finds himself in a world that has undergone greater changes in the past 30 years than occurred in the previous 300. He is just as sensitive to that which is beautiful, true and significant. He must seek to express the emerging ideas that motivate him in terms which these creative impulses may be best articulated. He cannot express these in the platitudes and patterns of his predecessors but must improvise and invent his own imagery, often his own schemata—while he would be much more popular and would communicate better were he content to paint roses on the ruins of a declining age, his stature will eventually be measured by how sensitively his creations reflect the influences activated by the heartbeat of the moment. And while he may start out to set the world on fire it inevitably happens that the world ignites within him a fire which in turn sets up a smoke signal, the significance of which often depends on how well we can read through the “glass of fashion and the mold of form.”

Wedding Anniversaries Celebrated

Mr. and Mrs. Gisli Gislason of Edmonton, Alberta, were honored in January on the occasion of their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Mr. Gislason is the son of the late Rev. Oddur V. Gislason who came to Canada in 1894 and was for many years minister of Icelandic Lutheran congregations. Mrs. Gislason is the former Margaret Crawford, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Crawford, both of whom were Icelandic. Mr. and Mrs. Gislason have 12

children most of whom live in the province of Alberta.

Mr. and Mrs. Tímóteus Böðvarsson, of Arborg, Manitoba, were honored in February on the occasion of their golden wedding anniversary when a reception was tendered by the community and friends far and near to pay them tribute. Mr. and Mrs. Böðvarsson, long residents of Geysir district prior to moving to Arborg, have over the years taken a prominent part in Icelandic and community affairs.

Every Moment—A Beginning

A sermon preached by REV. HALLDÓR KOLBEINS, of Vestmanna-Islands, Iceland

Our Father, Creator of everything. We thank Thee for Thy love. We thank Thee, that Thou hast made Thy Word go in triumph through the world. We thank Thee, that because of it Life is becoming brighter and happier. We thank Thee for the years that have vanished in the sea of time. We thank Thee that Thou hast guided us in time past.

And we pray Thee: be with us at all times.

Teach us to understand Life and Death and the ultimate importance of every moment and help us always to work for new and better things to come. May our thoughts, our words, our actions, our whole life be dedicated to Thee. Amen.

MARK I. 1. THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD. AMEN.

These words which I have chosen for my sermon are in Greek: Arke til evengeliu Jesú Kristu. Translated literally: Beginning of the glad tidings about Jesus Christ.

These are the first words in the oldest gospel, the gospel of Mark. We think that they are the title of the gospel, the name of the book. By thus naming the book the author no doubt means that he is going to tell the first chapter of a long story, a story that has not yet been finished. And by doing so this man, John Mark from Jerusalem, shows a profound understanding of Christ, his message and its power of influence. He has a vision

of Christ and his work as a beginning of something great, wonderful and incomparable, that will remain forever. He has understood that although Christ had been crucified the story of his life and work is **not** the story of the end of everything, but it is the story of the beginning of everything. Mark's attitude to Christendom is the attitude of youth, the attitude of the young man who is just beginning to live. But now it must be noticed that in the time of Mark the people generally did not agree with him in this matter. On the contrary, many were those and not few who looked upon the story of the life and work of Jesus Christ as the story about the end of everything, as a foreboding of the Day of Judgement, the end of this world. To those people the first chapter of the Gospel of Mark was not the beginning of a long story, but the last chapter of the story of God's attempt to win this visible world as it is, an attempt that had failed, because in spite of God's punishment of man and in spite of God's love of man, man was still wicked. Therefore the destruction must be coming soon. To be sure there was a wonderful time near for those saved and free from sin, in the new and happy world of Heaven; but the story of **this world as such** was coming to an end.

These two opposite views have since been struggling through Christendom. One group of Christians is always saying: "We witness the beginning. We live in times which are the beginning of the 'glad tidings' about Jesus Christ." Another group of Christians is always

saying: "We witness the end. We live in times when the glad tidings about Jesus Christ are being destroyed. Christianity is dying from Earth. It cannot reach perfection by natural development, the world must perish. If this is not so, new times will not come." And this latter group is now growing rapidly, when Christianity is persecuted in many lands throughout the world. Some time ago I had a conversation with an Icelandic member of parliament. He said: Christianity will soon have disappeared in Iceland. I also recently spoke with a well-known Icelandic clergyman, who loves the Church. He said, or rather asked: Will Christianity not be defeated by an other movement (and he named a certain political party).

Which of the two groups is right? The one which looks on Christianity and our times as a beginning, as Mark looked on those things he tells about: the beginning of **nobility of mind and soul** that will come by the natural process of growing and maturing as the **victory of Life in the time of Spring**, or the one which keeps saying that the story is coming to an end, either in a supernatural way or by the final victory of materialism? Which of these two groups is right?

One thing is certain. Jesus Christ endeavoured to make his disciples understand that He was **preaching the beginning and not the end, and that Life is to grow and develop according to Laws.** He took a child in His arms and put it among them as a symbol of the times to come. But everyone knows that a child does not become a grown-up man all at once, but grows little by little. There occurs no revolution in the life of a child who grows from one age to another; it grows according to the laws of life. And we see Jesus coming with a seed in His

hand and showing it as a symbol of His message about the world of God, and how the Life He is preaching is to grow and develop into true maturity. Such a symbol cannot represent the end, it can represent only the beginning. And when His disciples were arguing with each other how the world of God would manifest itself He said to them, to make it quite clear: The world of God is within you, in your own souls. And when He was dead and they thought that now they could surely say: Now all is finished—then He made the power of Holy Light recreate His dead body and came back to His disciples to give them His message about the times to come, and said to them: Peace be with you. Most certainly the disciple who, as a young man, was present in his mother's house when Jesus introduced the Last Supper, and who accompanied Him to the Garden of Getsemane and fled naked from there, when Jesus was arrested, most certainly he has shown that he understood His Master, by naming his book: **Beginning of the 'glad tidings' about Jesus Christ.** And we must agree with him and look upon Christianity to this day as the beginning, the **beginning of a bright and noble time, of God's Reign on this earth.**

Thus pointing out the difference between these two kinds of understanding about Christianity, I have also been thinking about this: Every moment represents two things at the same time: the end of the past, and the beginning of the future. And people can divide themselves into groups according to whether they generally look forward or backward, whether they look on each moment from the gloomy viewpoint of destruction or the bright viewpoint of birth and immortality. Both these viewpoints are right indeed. And logically man can call his life either

an end or a beginning. This is therefore a matter of choice. But which of the two directions should then be taken? Which? Let us take the same direction as the apostle when he says. **I forget what is gone, but reach for what lies before me and thus get on towards the objective.** Of course we think both about the past and the future. **But let the future be your queen. Let her reign.** Let us join the poet when he says: "Let us weep for the past, but not too long, so as not to make the future weep". Let us forget the past to such a degree that it will not hinder us, but let us remember the past to such a degree that it will put some gold in the hand of the future. According to my understanding, Christ has taught us to look on life in this way, to look on every moment as the beginning of the glad tidings, that should remind us to do the will of God, the Creator. But the name 'Creator' implies that to God every moment is a beginning. God is forever creating new worlds, new times, new lives and He is forgiving everything at every moment. .

How much brighter and happier life would be if people generally would look on it in this way, that every passing moment may be a moment of destiny, of the birth of a brighter and happier future. It is necessary to say good-bye to the past in a fair way, but it is more important to greet the future in a fair way. The errors and sufferings of mankind are in a great degree due to this, that people lead their lives or parts of their lives in a way as if they were living the end, not the beginning. Let us take an example: — Most people now receive instruction in schools during some part of their lives. Some think when they have passed their examinations: Let us pause, here is the end of our studies. But

others think: This is only the beginning, let us go on. And what are the results? Those who look upon their studies as finished, are ever afterwards retreating, withdrawing, getting smaller in mind and spirit. They forget what they have learned. They live without the will to act. They get inert. They have indeed ceased to live, as they believe in the **end**. Those who keep on continue to lead their lives towards maturity. They believe in the development of life, they believe in the **beginning**.

Let us mention science. A scientist told me: Science can only be applied to things that can be weighed and measured. This is not right. Science will reach things which are now beyond its scope. Science is still taking only the first, the initial steps, and cannot pass judgement on everything. However science has already proved that man's soul will live although his body dies. All who want to take the trouble can make sure of that. Science also has proved that love exists and is a great power although it can neither be measured with a tape-measure nor weighed on scales.

We must look on our life, our life-work, as a beginning of an eternal life. It is of the greatest importance that our short lifespan on this earth is a unit in the beginning of the 'glad tidings', of the universal attempt by God to create goodness throughout the world. Therefore we must be good, love God and all men with all our hearts. Then also Death will turn into the beginning of wonderful things.

And now I finally want to ask you one question, which, although a question, **answers** all other Christian questions: **What do you think about Christ? Is he coming or leaving?**

He is coming. We have only seen Him in the distance, but He is coming

nearer and nearer. He is coming and He is still carrying His cross on His shoulders. He is coming and He is still bathed in the light of the Resurrection. The prisons are ready to accept Him in all countries. Swords are turned towards His heart. Misunderstanding surrounds Him like a fog, and the winter of ignorance awaits Him with open arms of ice. But in spite of all that He is still preaching, because there are those who are calling on Him night and day, who understand that Christianity is still only at the beginning,

and they are praying for more light, more peace, more love. He is coming and let us come with Him, come with Him into the Light and carry with Him the burdens of the lover, the sufferings of the prophet and the pioneer. Let us be with Him from the beginning. Then winter will be summer, night will be day, death will be life.

Let our eyes open that we may see the truth, that every moment is a beginning in the world of God. —Amen

The Icelandic Canadian Club Banquet and Dance

The Icelandic Canadian Club has built up a reputation for putting on successful affairs during the past years. The banquet and dance held January 23rd in the Marlborough Hotel was no exception. Miss Caroline Gunnarson, President of the Club, presided.

The program was interesting and well received by the many people present. Mr. Gissur Eliasson was the guest speaker. He called his address "Smoke Signals", which was both humorous and thought provoking.

An innovation was a toast, proposed by Rev. P. M. Petursson, to Hangikjöt, an Icelandic national dish. Two ladies in the national dress of Iceland stood guard during the toast.

Grace was said by Dr. V. J. Eylands.

Prof. Richard Beck, president of the Icelandic National League, brought greetings from the League. Alderman John V. Samson brought greetings from the City of Winnipeg.

Mr. Richard Seaborn, M.L.A., concert master of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, rendered two violin solos, accompanied by Mrs. B. V. Isfeld.

Little Miss Janet Beckel danced acrobatic dances.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Gudrun Norman Scholarship of one hundred dollars to Miss Elin Josephson of Glenboro, Man. In presenting the scholarship Judge W. J. Lindal stated that Miss Josephson's scholastic standing was one of the highest of the students who have received the scholarship.

Judge Lindal announced that plans have been completed for two scholarships of one hundred dollars each to be presented in perpetuity starting next fall.

Jimmy Gowler's orchestra provided the music for the dance. Polkas, old time waltzes and square dances as well as the modern dances were enjoyed by all. —M. H.

ICELAND AND ITS ART

by MISS GLADYS PETTINGELL



MISS GLADYS PETTINGELL

*Until World War II Iceland was almost completely isolated, being off the path of sailing vessels and steamships. Now it has one of the largest, best equipped and important airfields in the world. Planes go winging in and out at all hours of the day and night, for Iceland lies directly on the Great Circle route, the shortest distance between Europe and America. Iceland's long isolation is ended.

As far as climate is concerned, the name Iceland is misleading. Although it lies in the Arctic Circle, the country is so warmed by the Gulf Stream that its harbours never freeze, yet being in the Arctic, it is never hot in summer. The early Icelandic settlers in Gimli must have had a rude shock when they experienced their first winter and their first summer in Canada, for they never knew such cold or such heat at home.

In the south lies Reykjavik, the

capital, with its wide harbor protected by two mountainous headlands. In the centre of the city lies a park-like square, from which the streets curve and twist up the slopes. The new buildings are all of concrete, and earthquake proof. There are grass, flowers, and shrubs in the front yards, but almost no trees. The austerity is softened by the mountains and the water. Iceland is not absolutely treeless, as some people state. It has about 250 acres of birch forests, as well as some mountain ash trees and evergreens. The city is very clean, due to the absence of smoke. There are no railroads, almost no factories, and no furnaces. The heating system is unique. Hot water is piped to the homes from inexhaustible hot springs, which deliver the water to the radiators and taps at boiling point. This project was begun in 1930, and was a great engineering feat, as there were no precedents to follow. As all fuel must be imported, it saves thousands of tons of coal yearly.

The largest city of the north, Akureyri, is quite beautiful and modern, with attractive buildings. It is the

*This is a part of an illustrated lecture which Miss Gladys Pettingell has delivered three times, in Winnipeg and in Brandon. For this lecture, Miss Pettingill had thirty slides prepared, and describing them was the main part of the lecture. —Editor.

shipping, shopping, and business centre of the north. It has a sunnier brighter climate than the south, where it rains heavily. The cooperative movement began as early as 1880 in Iceland, and Akureyri is the best place to see how it works. Until 1930, the 285 miles between Iceland's two largest cities, Reykjavik and Akureyri, had no connection whatever by vehicle. Inland mail was carried by pony or by men on foot fifteen times a year. Cargo went by boat around the coast. Today buses make the trip in a few hours. It is not likely that there will ever be railroads in that mountainous, volcanic country.

What occupations do the Icelanders follow? Fishing comes first and agriculture second. Since four-fifths of the country is uninhabited and uninhabitable, how can it be an agricultural country? In the valleys and along the coast there is sufficient space for many farms. Sheep-raising is probably the leading agricultural pursuit. The country has six sheep for every person, which is the highest percentage in the world. Farming sustains the domestic economy, whereas fishing sustains the foreign economy. Iceland must import. Fish procure for them their foreign exchange.

HISTORY

The first settlers were Irish monks seeking solitude. There is no evidence that man had lived there before. Most of these monks fled when the Vikings arrived from Norway, in 874. These were men of intelligence and character, who refused to live under a dictator at home. The individualistic chieftains who left Norway to be independent finally became so independent that the illustrious saga age was followed by a period of civil strife, in the second half of the twelfth and the first half

of the thirteenth centuries. This was the Sturlunga period. Finally, weary of internal war, Iceland entered into a union with Norway, with the provision that Norway would help keep the peace. The Icelanders did not realize that by this union they were giving up everything they had left Norway to obtain. They soon found out! From 1264 to 1944 they struggled to regain the heritage which they had lost. The **Althing**, the oldest parliament in the world, was shorn of its power. Also many other calamities overtook them. Lava from volcanic eruptions covered many regions, killed men and animals, and destroyed pasture. In 1402 the Black Death killed two-thirds of the population. In 1707 small-pox carried off one-third of the population. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries English marauders and Algerian pirates ravaged the coasts. It seems incredible that the nation survived at all, but they never gave up wholly to despair.

They had a great passion for learning. There were no schools, but the sagas were read and reread in the homes. Love of learning was their great consolation. During that whole dark period, the passion for independence and the passion for learning never died. Not until 1944 did Iceland receive its independence, after a long rule by Norway and Denmark. Once again the Althing was restored to its original power.

THE ARTS

In their darkest periods, the Icelanders clung to their literature. It became part of their very lives, their recreation and comfort. Iceland has the oldest living literary language in Europe. Of what did this literature consist? It is important to know, because all the Icelandic arts are dependent on its literature. It was the only art which

never died through all those long hard ages. It is a part of the inheritance of every Icelander, high or low, educated or uneducated, in a way that has no parallel in the English-speaking world.

The Skaldic or Court poetry was begun in Norway, but became exclusively Icelandic. The Icelanders had to travel in order to arrange for trade. Young men of the best families were sent to make contacts in foreign countries. The first requirement was one's ability as a skald or poet. He must be able to compose impromptu on any subject, and recite poetry in honor of the king or chief to whose court he went. He gained knowledge of distant places, which became a part of his poetry. When he went home, it was recited again and again and all listened and were educated by it. Its complicated metre and form make it very difficult for foreigners to understand. It is almost impossible to translate.

The Eddic poems were a collection dealing with early mythology, moral teachings, and heroic legends. Its authors are not known. It deals with the destiny of man and the world. The words are mystical and profound, and the poems have great grandeur. Longfellow himself called "Hiawatha" an Indian Edda, so the Eddas must have been founded on the same sort of tradition. The important prose Eddas I shall not mention.

The Sagas are a treasure of information and are very much alive even today. They are still read not only in the schools but in the humble homes. The skaldic poetry was scrupulously accurate, but the saga is a blend of fact and fiction. It is like the historical, biographical novel. Even in translation, the sagas make enjoyable reading. They are full of vigor and humor, imagination and emotion. They were probably the forerunner of the modern

novel. Watson Kirkconnell said of them, "Iceland's prose sagas have been characterized as Europe's greatest literary achievement between Virgil and Dante."

During the first three centuries of Icelandic history, all literary and historical material had to be preserved orally. It was memorized and passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth. In the long, dark Arctic winters, what did the people do? The Sagas, Eddas and Skaldic poems were recited aloud, the whole family memorized them, and took turns repeating them. One can imagine the long discussions and arguments which ensued. Later they were made into books, which were widely copied by hand. Consequently they became not the property of a favored few, but the treasure of the people as a whole. They were read and reread down through the centuries. Hence Old Icelandic has not become a dead language as did Greek and Latin.

From the old sagas it is learned that spinning and weaving as well as embroidery were highly developed arts. Why are there no examples today of these earliest crafts? The damp climate was such that fabrics were destroyed with age. The women, however, have kept on embroidering, and so their work has filled the gap between the old and the new. They kept alive the old traditional patterns.

SCULPTURE

Now at last I am coming to modern Icelandic art, and the first thing I shall discuss is sculpture. Einar Jónsson is Iceland's greatest sculptor. His art did not arise from earlier Icelandic sculpture, because there was none. Nor does it seem to have any similarity to modern foreign sculpture. His nearest spiritual ancestors are no doubt the

old Icelandic poets. This does not mean that he simply represented in his sculptures the stories from the old sagas. He uses the old folk tales very often, but he always gives them a universal meaning. He gives expression to his own philosophy of life through his sculptures.

In his work "The Wave of the Ages", we see a water-spout, sucked in a spiral toward the sky as if by magic. The artist has succeeded in making the wave resemble the female figure, whose body becomes more beautiful and perfect the higher it ascends. Thus the wave becomes a symbol of humanity which is drawn upward in spite of itself. One figure has already reached the top, but many more are still struggling in the trough of the wave.

In "Evolution" we see the figures of an animal, a giant, and a man, which symbolize the three stages of the evolution of the soul. The soul rises gradually from the drowsing animal, to the stooping giant, and then to man who stretches upward holding aloft the crucifix, to indicate the redeeming power of suffering.

I have mentioned only two of his works, to give an idea of the type, but he was a very prolific artist. He was the real pioneer of Icelandic sculpture. The government built for him the "Einar Jónsson" museum at Reykjavik, which is crowded with his works. His studio and living quarters were there also. He died in 1954. His work is so very symbolic that it is not easy to understand. He broke new ground. He had no interest at all in imitation of either nature or ideas. One of his fine works stands in Philadelphia. He had many good offers to remain in the United States, but he chose to return to Iceland.

There is also great enthusiasm for painting in Iceland. The homes of the

people in every walk of life are full of paintings. The poor buy from young unknown painters, while the rich buy for huge sums from the famous. In a small country everyone knows some painter in whom he is interested and from whom he wants to buy. There are also many amateurs. Almost everyone seems to rush out after work to paint. All this enthusiasm for art is new, as there was literally no painting done in Iceland until the turn of the century. About the only forerunner was the embroidery and handwork of the women. Better transportation seems to have given them the lift they needed to forge ahead. Now their sculptors and painters can compete with the best in the world.

J. S. Kjarval, probably Iceland's best known painter, was born in 1885, and is still living and working vigorously.

It seems a marvel that sixty years ago a young lad in a remote corner of Iceland began to paint pictures. What drove him to it? He had literally no paintings to inspire him. He had never seen a picture except perhaps the occasional label on a tin of fruit or salmon. "Did the fountains inspire you to paint?" he was asked. "No, ships", he replied. This is natural. No one can imagine what the ship has meant to the Icelander for a thousand years. It has been a symbol to him, a link between the known and the unknown. In Kjarval's work ships appear in all stages of development. Examine these ships carefully and they do not even look seaworthy, except his very early ones. And yet he spent five seasons on a fishing boat to earn money for study.

His youthful work before he went to Copenhagen to study was quite traditional, as you see by his pictures. There are blue masses of sky and sea, and the seaworthy ship. Later, he gets

so close to the mountains that they cease to be blue. He avoids taking up half his canvass with blue sky. The horizon has moved so high in the picture that there is no room for sky. He has moved from the distant view to the close at hand. What is near to him is the only thing that matters. Distance is no longer romantic. This is natural I suppose to the modern artist who can so easily get to the side of, to the top of, and even above a mountain. From above, a mountain looks as flat as a pancake, and there is not much romance in that. Kjarval works with his nose almost touching the mountain, as it were.

Kjarval's attitude is one of restlessness, of search, and of experiment. He must doubt everything that is ordinarily taken for granted. He must accept the most fantastic as worthy of consideration. This is the stimulating thing about his art. He keeps alive curiosity, his own as well as that of the viewer. The visible and the mythical world are always close together in his works, due no doubt to the fact that he is steeped in the old sagas and legends. Even the most matter-of-fact landscape may have an elf, or a supernatural woman, or some other symbol, concealed in some corner. Some of these pictures might even be called landscape disguised as supernatural beings, or vice versa. I have in mind two paintings, "Art in Application" and "Old Memories", in which the trees and the rocks are at the same time human figures. This type of picture is probably unique in modern art.

Kjarval and two of his older contemporaries were pioneers. They discovered Iceland as far as painting is concerned, much as our Group of Seven discovered Canada for us. Hall-dór Laxness, a leading novelist in Iceland, stated that had no other painter but Kjarval existed in Iceland in this century, Iceland would still have earned a place among the nations of the world in art, simply because he lived and worked there.

Jón Stefánsson, who was four years older than Kjarval, studied under Matisse and in style seems to be much closer to the European painters than does Kjarval.

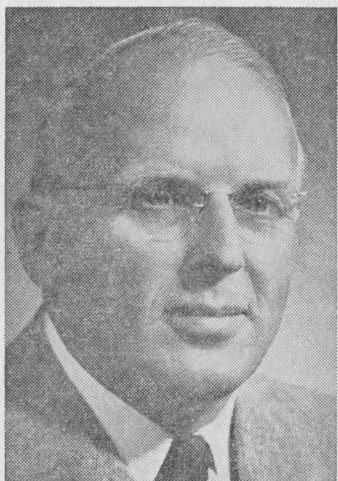
Many of his most important works belong to the Icelandic National Gallery, and to the National Gallery of Copenhagen. He has done many canvasses with animals as part of the landscape, such as the two loons with the background of water and blue mountain, the long-haired ponies in the winter wilderness, or the birds in flight against a stormy sky.

Sefánsson was very modest and very self-critical. "I am not very much impressed with myself or my life's work", he said of himself. But he had a dogged persistence which kept him striving for perfection.

In Iceland, an artist is one of the most respected persons. The government encourages him in every way, by giving him financial support for study abroad, and later by buying his works. Where does the government get all this money? Perhaps part of the answer is that they have no army to support.



THE STONESON BROTHERS AND THE THE CITY THEY BUILT



HENRY STONESON



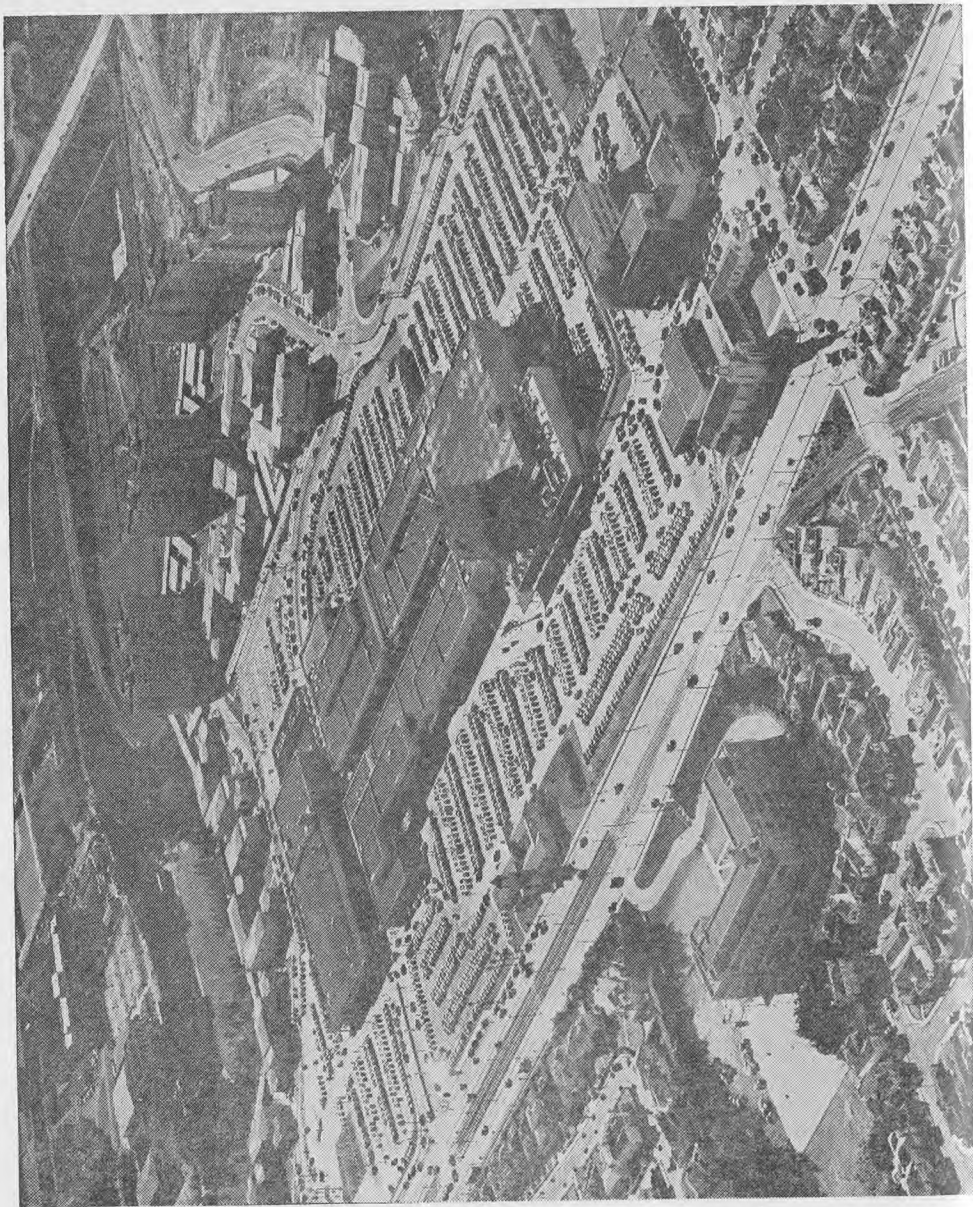
ELLIS LEO STONESON

Stoneson Brothers, the building tycoons of San Francisco, in spite of limited educational opportunities in early life, made a greater impact upon the construction business in California than most others whose beginnings were more auspicious. They combined a skillful use of hammer and saw with a natural talent for planning and design. It is said that Ellis could see a barren, worthless acre of land and in his mind's eye spread it with beautiful stately buildings.

In their early twenties they became contractors on a small scale in Alaska, British Columbia, and finally in the State of Washington. They, however, were not satisfied with the opportunities afforded them there. After considering several other locales, they decided to head for San Francisco where opportunities for the exercise of their varied talents seemed to beckon.

With tool kits as their sole possession they at first took odd jobs, such as home repairs and alterations, thus acquainting themselves with "what was what" in the building trade of this area. Subsequently they ventured into the building of family dwellings.

Their friend, Fred Thorarinson, who had come with them to San Francisco, shared their interest in the building trade. The initial capital of the partnership which the three formed was a mere seven hundred dollars. Fortunately, the owner of a "building supply" concern was sympathetic. Upon approaching him for a loan of materials with which to build a house to be put up for sale, their small capital to be their down payment, the man looked them in the eye and said, "You look honest to me. I'll take a chance on you". This resulted in a lifelong tie between Supplier and Contractor, for Stoneson Brothers and Thorinson (as



he spells it now) never forgot that magnanimous show of faith, and dealt henceforth with this man's company.

Stoneson Brothers and Thorinson were partners for many years. Later the partnership dissolved and Mr. Thorinson went into business for himself. He too was very successful.

They built the house and sold it. They built more houses and sold them. Eventually the time was ripe to forge ahead into mass production of housing units. They purchased a tract of building sites for residential homes in St. Mary's Park of the Mission District, near the Crocker-Amazon Park. There they built homes and sold them. "We are in business," one of them said. They also made their own private homes on this tract.

They bought more sites and tracts, built more houses, sold them, and directed their profits into further undertakings. It is said that, "This procedure has continued with such success that firms like the Equitable Life Insurance Company, which does not bet on horse-races, are partners in the financial problems involved." The total number of dwelling units constructed to date is about 12,000.

Later, the firm activated its interests in the Lake Merced area, buying many acres of land and constructing houses at the rate of approximately one a day. In 1937, the Stonesons were building up the Lakeside District that had previously been a number of small truck-farms (here in the West a truck-farm is a small vegetable farm—anywhere from one to several acres in size—each owner trucking his vegetables to market). They selected this site because "the trend of growth was toward the West of Twin Peaks Section."

Forty-five years ago the "West of Twin Peaks" section was an isolated region with the appearance of an aban-



DONALD HENRY STONESON

doned countryside, interspersed with a few struggling cabbage patches and vegetable plots. It was in effect cut off from the San Francisco city proper by hills and inadequate roads. Eventually, the Municipal Railway constructed the Twin Peaks Tunnel (three miles long) and extended miles of track through this desolate area of sand dunes. This was "Winning the West" on a small scale. The building of the transcontinental railroads was of more fundamental importance to the nation than the discovery of gold in California, for the population was transported by rails, expediting the settlement of the West. The construction of the street-car tracks through the tunnel and the wastelands meant future opportunities for builders, home owners and businesses of all kinds. Soon the area was settled as was the West, and the Stoneson brothers moved their families to Lakeside.

The Stonesons were quick to recognize the advantages of building in that area. As a result they and several other major subdividers have about exhausted the availability of land.

The Lakeside development occupied their time and energy from 1937 to the beginning of World War II which restrained home building activities. But after the controls were removed the Stoneson Brothers were prepared for their greatest enterprise. They built a city within a city—a city within the boundaries of San Francisco. This city known as Stonestown, was opened in 1952, but with one tragic note—Ellis the older brother, passed away suddenly from a heart attack one week before the official opening.

It is said that, "During the planning stage, the project developed into the most modern undertaking of its kind in the United States—surpassing such well-publicized projects as the Leavitt towns along the Atlantic seaboard". In homes and apartments the project provided thousands with living quarters and service facilities for comfortable living. There are over seventy-five business establishments, eliminating the necessity of trips to the older shopping and business sections of San Francisco. Stonestown is a completely self-contained community centre.

With Stonestown Shopping Centre representing various firms long established in the metropolitan area of San Francisco, the problem of decentralization has been solved. The firms were offered to lease quarters at a minimum rental fee and pay extra rental through a percentage assessment on gross receipts, if business "is good".

After the various factors of profit and loss were considered, the conclusion was that Stonestown Shopping Centre must do a \$40-million-a year business to be profitable. It was agreed that this gross income could not be expected at the beginning—a reasonable time must be allowed to pass before that amount of business could be

expected. The first-month's income topped the 25 million dollar mark.

The parking survey disclosed that the free parking space for 2600 cars was occupied not only by cars of San Francisco shoppers, but by cars of shoppers from other Bay Area communities as far away as 50 to 100 miles. A unique feature of the shopping centre of Stonestown is an underground network of tunnels for the use of commercial and service trucks.

The commercial area covers over 42 acres. There are 683 apartments on the remaining 25 acres. "The beauty of Stonestown, with its palm-lined streets, exquisite landscaping, indirect lighting, modern stores and business facilities—service to the people amid pleasant surroundings and with ease of ingress and egress—these things have attracted and held its patrons."

The Stoneson Development Corporation (as the firm is now known) continues building on both sides of the Bay Area.

Ellis Leo Stoneson was born July 15, 1893, in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. He died August 23, 1952, in San Francisco. His widow is Kristbjörg (Bertha), daughter of Sigurður and Ingibjörg Thordarson. Bertha was born in Iceland. She came to Canada with her parents when she was a small child. The Thordarsons settled in Selkirk, later moving to Point Roberts at the West Coast where Bertha met Ellis. Three children were born to Ellis and Bertha: Donald Henry Stoneson; Mildred Elaine Baktiari; and Louise Detweiler. There are ten grandchildren.

Henry Stoneson was born May 17, 1895. He died December 30, 1958. His widow is Willette. Henry was twice married. His first wife was Hazel Chresson (of Noregian descent, born and raised in Seattle, Washington) who died some years ago leaving him with

two daughters, Eloise Preston and Helen Schumacher. There are five grandchildren.

Two sisters survive Ellis and Henry: Stephanie Ingibjörg María Oddstad, widow of Dr. Andrés Fjeldsted Oddstad (who was decorated with the Order of the Falcon for promoting the culture of Iceland). Dr. Oddstad was instrumental in organizing the Icelandic Society of Northern California and was its first President. Dr. and Mrs. Oddstad's home was Open House to all Icelander where they were received with a warm welcome. Their other sister is Guðrún (Rooney) Kristopherson, wife of Kjartan Kristopherson, formerly of Argyle, son of Sigurður Kristopherson and Caroline Taylor, the first couple to be married at Gimli in 1877. Caroline Taylor was of Scottish descent, but she learned to speak Icelandic.

The parents of Ellis and Henry were the late Thorsteinn Thorsteinsson (Stone Stoneson) and Ingibjörg Einarsson. Thorsteinn was born in 1860 at Hraunkot, in Borgarfjörður, Iceland. He was 76 when he died in Blaine, Washington. Ingibjörg was born August 2, 1862 at Sólheimstunga, in Borgarfjörður, Iceland. When she was three years old she was adopted by Stefán prófastur (Archdeacon) and his wife Ingibjörg, at Stafholt, Borgarfjörður. She was married at that home. In 1887 she and her husband came to Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. A daughter was born to them the following year in Winnipeg, Stephanie Ingibjörg María (Mrs. Oddstad), whom they named after the Archdeacon Stefán and his wife, Ingibjörg. They then moved to the West Coast where their other children were born. They lost one 8-year-old boy, Baldwin, in Blaine, Washington, and their son, Jóhann Thórður, died in Vancouver, B. C., in January, 1927, at the age of 34. He left

a widow of Scottish descent and three children.

Grandma Stoneson (as she was lovingly called) died in Blaine, Washington at the age of 90.

The first to make a monetary contribution towards the construction of an Icelandic Old Folks Home at Blaine, Washington, in 1945 were Ellis and Henry Stoneson. The amount was an exceedingly generous one with yet a larger pledge to follow, thus starting the successful "Drive" which followed. The Home was named "Stafholt" in honour of the place where their mother was raised.

Ellis and Henry Stoneson contributed \$1000.00 each to the endowment fund for the Chair in Icelandic Language and Literature in the University of Manitoba.

In poverty and prosperity alike, Ellis and Henry were ever solicitous of the welfare of their parents and other relatives. Their generosity towards them never ceased.

"As ye soweth, so shall ye reap."

After the death of Henry Stoneson, his nephew, Donald Henry Stoneson, 36 years old, son of Ellis and Bertha, was made Vice-President of the Stoneson Development Corporation. Surely Donald will fill that position ably, for doubtless he has been indoctrinated with his father's business acumen. He is endowed with a modest and an appealing personality, radiating sensitivity and kindness together with an undercurrent of firmness and determination, a good combination for success in the business world. We wish him well in his new and responsible position.

Donald has been married twice. His present wife is Gloria. He has two children by his first wife and one by the second.

We who are of Icelandic descent are

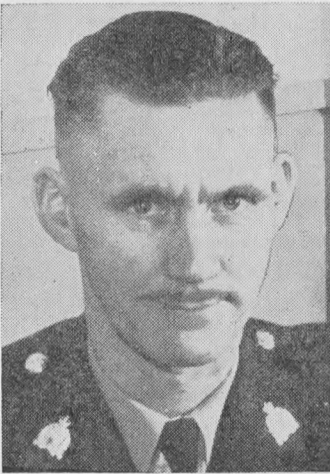
especially proud and pleased when our own kind make a worthy contribution to the great mosaic of this land of opportunities. It is a satisfying feeling to know that we are a part of a racial group whose contribution to the welfare of the land of its adoption is in proportion to its small membership, above the average.

May the memory of the Stoneson

Brothers live long in the hearts of all who knew them. Stonestown and a vast area of San Francisco will long reap the benefit of the monumental achievements of these two men whose hammer and saw were symbolic of vision, aspiration, and courage.

Dreams are the stuff which castles are made of. —**Louise Gudmunds**

Wins Merited Award



Ingimundur Guðjón Thorsteinson

Ingimundur Guðjón Thorsteinson, a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for over twenty years, was promoted to Sergeant in November 1959. Sergeant Thorsteinson is now the head of a ten man RCMP detachment at Fort St. John's in the Peace River district in British Columbia. He has previously served in seven B. C. communities, and had worked in the Criminal Investigation Bureau in Vancouver. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. John Thorsteinson of Steep Rock, Manitoba. His father came from Iceland in 1910. His mother, Margaret, is a daughter of Ingimundur and Valgerður Erlendson.

The Alaska Highway News of Jan 28, 1960, after telling the story says:

"There are in Canada now about 20,000 people of Icelandic descent. They have produced many outstanding professional people, writers, doctors, lawyers and engineers. When one realizes that Iceland has the oldest democratic parliament in the world, dating back to the year 930, this is no coincidence. In the whole of Iceland, even today, there are not many police officers, for the principle of freedom and its abuses is very close to the Icelandic heart. These people, possibly because of their rugged background, are seldom in court. Because of these characteristics, which all seem to share, not a great deal of publicity attends them nor the country which bred them."

Terry (as he is nicknamed) Thorsteinson, when retirement comes up for him, would like to return to the land of his father to have a look at places, things and people of which he has always heard. Icelandic hearts must be close to those of the Celtic people in this respect. They are clanish, and hold deep sentiment for the homeland.

Sergeant Thorsteinson's wife is the former Marion Clark of Saskatchewan, a graduate nurse of St. Paul's Hospital, Saskatoon. They have two boys, Barrie 15 years and Donald 10 years.

The Icelandic Students' Association

"We are in danger of losing the things of value that are in our Icelandic heritage." With this thought in mind the organization of the Icelandic Students' Association was begun last fall. To counteract this tendency the following constitution was adopted for the I.S.A.

The Icelandic Students' Association is:

1. To assist in making the things of value in our Icelandic heritage a living part of ourselves as Canadian citizens and thus improve the quality of our contribution to the distinctively Canadian pattern.
2. To provide an organization by which the children of the ever increasing mixed marriages may be reached, and through which we would seek to instil in them a better knowledge and a keener appreciation of our heritage.
3. To provide a means whereby Canadians of Icelandic extraction, pure or mixed, can become better acquainted with each other and thus strengthen the common bond of the past which in itself will strengthen the common bond of the future in the larger Canadian scene.
4. To encourage young Icelandic Canadians to strive for a higher education so that those of Icelandic extraction may be well represented in the Professions and that a scholarship fund may be established to further this purpose.

The activities of the I.S.A. will further these ends. The members are planning to learn Icelandic folk dances and songs. It is hoped that these will be ready for presentation at the Icelandic Celebration in Gimli next summer.

The main emphasis in the organization centres upon a study of Icelandic literature and an evaluation of that literature, ancient and modern. A lively interest has been shown by the members in the learning of conversational Icelandic. It is hoped that papers may be delivered not only by guest speakers but also by the members themselves. Attendance at the last two meetings has been approximately twenty persons.

Up to the seventeenth of February three meetings had been held. At the first meeting Judge Walter J. Lindal was the guest speaker. He gave us invaluable advice on the founding of the club. It is at this point that I would like to thank Mr. Lindal for the time and effort that he has put into helping the I.S.A. become organized. His encouragement and advice have in a large part been responsible for the success of the I.S.A.

The speaker at the second meeting was Professor Haraldur Bessason, head of the Department of Icelandic Languages and Literature at the University of Manitoba. He gave a lecture on the history of the Icelandic language and stressed its importance in the European group of languages.

At the third meeting Mrs. G. Johnson showed slides that she took on her trip to Iceland in 1957. Tape recordings of modern music in Icelandic also were played. .

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Icelandic Canadian Club for their help and encouragement, and for the wonderful evening we had at their annual

banquet. Also, thanks to United College and the First Lutheran Church for the use of their facilities.

—William D. Valgardson
Reporter for the I.S.A.

News From Iceland

The Icelanders have for a considerable length of time been confronted with serious economic difficulties as there has been an increasing deficit arising from the heavy payments owing to foreign countries in recent years.

According to financial reports issued by the National Bank of Iceland the deficit with foreign countries in 1958 totalled 140 million krónur and since then the development of monetary affairs has been most unfavourable. The currency exchange tax and export subsidies were greatly increased in order to offset the difference between domestic and foreign prices. As a consequence of these monetary difficulties the domestic demand for foreign exchange has far exceeded supply.

The Government of Iceland has, however, been able to acquire loans from foreign institutions, a great part of which has been invested in profitable undertakings. Nevertheless it can hardly be doubted that the Government has gone too far in this borrowing, for now more than 10% of the total annual income of the nation has to be used for the payment of principal and interest. But before the Icelanders can accuse their previous governments they have to consider the fact that if loans had not been acquired an operational stand-still would have been inevitable in various segments of the production industry.

In 1958 the view was expounded by the Managing Board of the National

Band of Iceland that the nation had been living beyond its means, both in terms of investment and consumption. In order to improve the situation the Government would have to institute far-reaching measures to attain equilibrium between supply and demand. The Government has now acted by proposing a devaluation of the Icelandic "króna" and abolition of export subsidies. To give an idea of the drastic measures that are about to be taken it is sufficient to mention that the exchange rate between the Pound Sterling and the Icelandic "króna" is to be raised from approximately kr. 45.70 to kr. 106.00 and the rate of the American dollar from ca. kr. 16.32 to kr. 38.00.

The political parties by no means reached a unanimous agreement in this matter. Judging by Icelandic papers both the Communists and the Liberal Progressives fought vigorously against this proposed Parliamentary Act as they maintain that lower income groups will be more seriously affected by it than others. It is, however, almost certain that the Act will be passed by Alþing.

This means, in all probability, that the standard of living will fall, but it seems as if the Government had no other alternative than to resort to some effective measure. It is to be hoped that these measures will serve the purpose of stabilizing the national economy. —Haraldur Bessason

JAKOBINA JOHNSON

Mrs. Jakobina Johnson's latest book "Northern Lights" is a collection of translations, 91 pages, some of which are old and others new.

But this is not a review. This new volume follows in the pattern of previous volumes in range of subjects selected. Both in originals and in translations Jakobina Johnson's poetic art reveals to the reader her deep love of what is beautiful, her fondness of what is of the home and close to nature. That is what the visitor feels at once upon entering the doorstep of her beautiful home in Seattle, full of books of choice literature, and treasures of art gathered from near and far. On the outside there are beautiful flowers and shrubbery, shady nooks beneath branches of spreading trees. Through it all permeates her welcome smile.

It is not difficult to understand that students from Iceland, who during the years of World War II, found in her home a "sælustaður á heiði", should want to repay the cultural enrichment they acquired during the hours they spent in Jakobina Johnson's home. This feeling of gratitude found expression in an invitation extended to her to travel back to Iceland once more. She chose to travel by ship rather than by air in order that she might have ample time not only to complete the written record but to draw upon fond memories and diffuse them with ennobling thoughts of the moment that they might provide a message of inherent merit which she could bring to those who had honoured her with the invitation.

While in Iceland on this visit in 1959 Jakobina Johnson completed the editing of "Northern Lights" which



Jakobina Johnson

was published by "Bókarútgáfa Menn-ingarsjóðs", the "Cultural Fund" of Iceland.

Instead of quoting specific lines or verses from this book of translations three of the translated poems are selected: the title poem "Northern Lights", "Mountain and hillock"; and "Come and sit beside me".

Mountain and Hillock

STEINGRÍMUR THORSTEINSSON

1831 — 1913

A lowly hillock raised its head
And to the lofty mountain said:
"Your innate pride and haughty mein
Are rueful in the distance seen."
The mountain neither moved nor
spoke.
It knew not who the silence broke.

NORTHERN LIGHTS

EINAR BENEDIKTSSON

1864—1940

Was ever such vision to mortals sent
As Northern Lights in the heavens flaming?
The shoreline a golden archway framing.
— Who now is at drinking and cards content? —
The earth lies serene and on sleep intent
Under a cover of roses decaying.
Rare colors the grains of sand present.
Where waters meet, there is a silver spraying.
The north is aglow with an ornate show
Of Borealis' displaying.

From the seventh heav'n to the ocean's rim,
The suns hold a dance with the curtain lifted.
The white-capped billows of light are shifted,
Then break on a strand of shadows dim.
An unseen hand directs at its whim
This glittering round of streamers flowing.
To regions of light from the darkness grim,
All earth-life now turns with fervor growing.
—And a crystal gaze on the glowing haze
The hoary cliffs bestowing.

How base seem the issues and trifling the call
That claims our life — or we strive denying.
Let mortals attack me with hatred defying,
I now feel at peace with each creature small.
So fair and immense is this vault over all —
And smiling the stars, though our hopes be arrested.
The mind goes soaring, no heights appall —
Divine is the power through the dust manifested.
We fathom our strength — our rights are at length
In the kingdom of light attested.

How mighty an ocean the heavens bright —
And brave the vessels attempting the sailing.
A haven they seek with courage unfailing,
Whether they swerve or their course holds right,
But none have beheld Him who gave us sight,

Nor shown us the source of these marvels abiding.
 At the door of His temple, this glorious night,
 In homage they pray from their hearts confiding.
 But vainly they wait — for locked is each gate,
 And silent the spirit presiding.

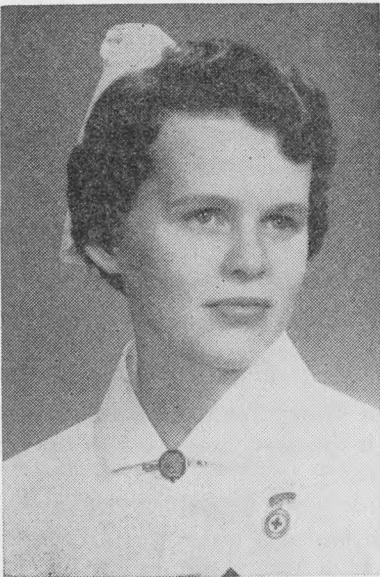
COME AND SIT BESIDE ME

DAVÍÐ STEFÁNSSON, (1895 —)

Come and sit beside me,
 Sister, tonight.
 We shall sit in silence
 While fades the light.
 Naught shall break the silence —
 Never a sound.
 Mother tries to sleep when twilight
 Gathers around.
 Mother should be sleeping.
 You must agree.

—Some are worn with sorrow,
 Yet sleep can set them free.
 Some are worn with sorrow
 And some with longing tired,
 But find in the dream-world
 Wonders desired.
 Sit by me in silence,
 Sister, tonight,
 Mother should be sleeping
 While fades the light.

Awarded Scholarship



Unnur Kristjanson

Unnur Kristjanson, daughter of Mrs. Holmfridur Kristjanson and the late Fridrik Kristjanson, of Winnipeg, graduated as a registered nurse from the Winnipeg General Hospital in February 1959. Her previous education was obtained at Laura Secord School, and Gordon Bell High School, and for one year at the University of Manitoba, where she took a course in Science. After graduating as a nurse, she worked for six months in the Research Ward in the Winnipeg General Hospital. In September 1959 she was awarded a scholarship of \$600.00 for further education, and is now taking Nursing Education at the University. She plans to continue studies at a university to become Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

Manitoba's Minister Of Health and Public Welfare



Dr. George Johnson

It is most unusual that the press of both the opposition and the party in power are eulogistic in their reports of the administration of Departments of Government. One exception is the Department of Health and Public Welfare, administered by Hon. George Johnson, M.D. The following are extracts from press reports when the estimates of the Department came before the house, now in session.

Winnipeg Free Press

reported by Ellen N. Simmons

The estimates of the Department of

Health and Welfare produced subject matter as heartening as the earlier debate was disheartening. Geo. Johnson, the Minister requested premission on Thursday to break his statement in introduction to his estimates into three parts, for he had too much to say, he said, to do it on one occasion.

If the remaining two parts of his statement are in content anything like the first, the MLAs will gladly listen to three ministerial statements instead of one.

Dr. Johnson is somewhat of a phenomenon as cabinet Ministers go. To the Opposition he is at once a source of inspiration and despair. He approaches his job with the zeal of a missionary and the energy of an athlete; and that they cannot help but admire and applaud.

Dr. Johnson concluded his statement on Thursday by noting that the problem of Manitoba's people of Indian ancestry had been steadily multiplying since Manitoba entered Confederation. "I am proud," he said "to introduce the estimates which will for the first time give governmental recognition to this serious situation.

Dr. Johnson has reason to be proud.

The Winnipeg Tribune

by Don McGillivray

Dr. George Johnson's desktide manner is the most reassuring in the Legislature.

The tall, almost diffident Gimli physician who entered the Legislature less than two years ago as a political unknown, has become one of the best

liked and most trusted member of the cabinet.

His opponents preface almost every criticism—and there are few criticisms—with the statements that they are against this or that government policy but FOR Dr. Johnson.

He is Opposition Leader Douglas Campbell's favorite cabinet minister. He's applauded by the CCF. He has the full confidence of Premier Duff Roblin.

The reason for this unusual popularity is that Dr. Johnson is about as unpolitical as a man can be and still win

two elections and serve for 18 months as a key minister in a provincial government.

In both prepared statements and off-the-cuff answers he shows knowledge and enthusiasm which could only come from personally sifting through the details of every part of his vast and complex department which this year has a spending program second only to that of education.

According to Legislative talk the health minister has yet to learn to delegate a reasonable amount of work to subordinates. He works too hard.

The Midwinter Convention and Concert

The three-day annual convention of The Icelandic National League, held this year February 22–23–24, has become much more than the annual meeting of the League. It has become a gathering of people who look forward to seeing one another, be it but once a year. In spirit it is a continuation of the Þorablót, which in turn derives from heathendom. It will be recalled that for many years the Þorablót was staged in February by the "Helgi Magri" Club, under the inspiring leadership of the late Ólafur S. Thorgeirsson.

The convention was opened on Monday morning with Dr. Richard Beck, President of The Icelandic National League, in the chair. In his address he covered the activities of the League and gave a resume of leading events among Vestur-Íslendingar during the year.

The concert on Monday night was under the auspices of the Chapter Frón, with its President, Heimir Thorgrims-son, presiding. The speaker was Rev. Ingþór Indriðasson, a recent arrival

from Iceland. In his address he was surprisingly accurate in sensing and evaluating what is taking place as the newcomer integrates into the Canadian scene. He said: "Kanadísk menning er ný menning. Hún er ekki ensk, ekki frönsk og enn síður íslensk, hún er kanadísk". In translation: "Canadian culture is not English, not French and certainly not Icelandic; it is Canadian."

The speaker sounded a note that applies to a few in all the the ethnic groups. It is quite understandable and includes Britishers as well as individuals of other ethnic origins. He said: "Eg hefi orðið þess var, að sumir hér sjá Ísland í ljóma fjarlægðarinnar. Allt, sem íslenskt heitir, er gott, allt annað er einskis virði. Íslensk tunga er öðrum tungum helgari og betri." Translated: "I have become aware that some people here look on Iceland in the radiance of the distant scene. Everything Icelandic is good, everything else of no value. Icelandic is better and more sacred than any other tongue."

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Miss Margaret Jonasson and Mr. Erlingur Eggertson sang solos; Miss Sigrid Bardal gave a piano selection and Mr. Gisli Jónsson, one of our poets, recited some of his choice poems.

The Icelandic Canadian Club sponsored the concert on Tuesday evening with its President, Miss Caroline Gunnarsson, in the chair. The speaker was Oscar Bjornson, M.L.A., whose address appears elsewhere in this issue.

The three children of Mr. and Mrs. J. Kerr Wilson gave instrumental selections: a trio; a cello solo by Eric; a violin solo, by Carlisle; and a piano solo by Kerrine. Miss Margaret Jonasson and Rev. Hjalti Guðmundsson, another newcomer from Iceland, sang solos, and Heida Kristjansson, a girl of 7, played a piano solo. The accompanists were Mrs. J. Kerr Wilson,

Miss Snjolaug Sigurdson and Miss Sigrid Bardal.

The final concert, Wednesday night, was under the auspices of the League itself, with the Vice-President, Rev. P. M. Petursson, presiding. Dr. Arni Helgason of Chicago gave an informative address on modern Iceland, based upon his recent trip. This he supplemented by color films which centred upon the industrial growth of Iceland with special emphasis on the fishing industry and power development.

Mrs. Elma Gislason sang Icelandic songs, accompanied by Mrs. W. Kristjansson. Elin Josephson and Gail Dalman, pupils of Snjolaug Sigurdson, played piano solos and Patricia Johnson, a pupil of Elma Gislason, sang "Ólafur reið með björgum fram."

This rounded out a three-day successful meet and entertainment.—W. J. L.

BOOK REVIEW

THE VIKINGS

By R. R. SELLMAN

Illustrated, 68 p.p.

ROY PUBLISHERS, New York, 1959

\$2.95 bound

This book provides a short, but well-rounded popular survey of the history of the Vikings. Against the background of their heroic outlook upon life as reflected in their religion, and taking into full account the prevailing conditions in their homelands as well as in the lands which they visited, the author gives a graphic description of their far-flung activities.

He tells of the beginnings of expansion, describes the various stages of Viking attack, and goes on to tell of their raids and later settlements in Ireland, the Orkneys and Scotland, Wales, England, Western Europe, the Baltic

coasts, Russia, the Faroe Islands, Iceland, Greenland and America.

The Viking expeditions to England and the lasting Norse settlements there are dealt with in relative detail, as is the settlement of Iceland, because of their special historical importance and their permanent results in language and literature. The settlement of Greenland which in turn resulted in the Norse discovery of North America and the attempted settlement there are also adequately considered within the framework of this short history.

While the accounts of the Viking settlements elsewhere are generally somewhat briefer, they, nevertheless, present a clear picture of the activities and the impact of the intrepid Norsemen in those countries.

Though popular in nature, the book is based on a wide reading of the sources and carefully prepared. In the section on Iceland (otherwise quite

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satisfactory within its limits) I have, however, noted an error which probably should be corrected (p. 50). It was not the people of Reykjavik but of the Westman Islands south of Iceland whom the Moorish pirates from the Barbary Coast of Africa carried off to slavery in the seventeenth century.

The material is clearly presented and in a fluent style. The main characteristics of the Vikings and their influence are described with understanding and fairness. Witness this summarizing paragraph:

"As a people they cannot be neatly labelled, for they had many sides and characters. In their wanderings they met the widest variety of challenge and

circumstance, and the most notable thing about them is the adaptability with which they met whatever came. It was this very quality which allowed them to change so rapidly from blood-stained destroyers to peaceable, civilized folk, and to fit in wherever they settled."

The many illustrations and maps, the appendices and informative notes, the selected book list and the index, add to the value and interest of the book.

Primarily written for juvenile readers, it achieves its purpose well. In short, it is a welcome addition to Roy's Informative Reference Series for high school students.

—Richard Beck

The Reykjavik Male Voice Choir from Iceland is scheduled to perform in the Civic Auditorium at Winnipeg, Man. next October 21 and 22, according to an announcement in February.

The Winnipeg appearance of the 36-voice group is the Celebrity Concert series in that city. Choir director is Sigurður Thórðarsson, and Guðmundur Jónsson soloist.

The choir will perform in the Manitoba capital in the course of a North American tour. The group toured North America 14 years ago and has performed abroad over the years, including tours on the European continent.

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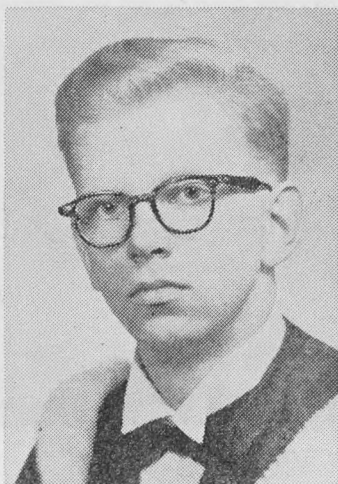


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In The News

DONALD SWAINSON WINS FELLOWSHIP



Donald Wayne Swainson

The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation has released the names of winners of Wilson National Fellowships for graduate study in the academic year 1960-61. Included in the list is Donald Wayne Swainson, at present a fifth year honors student in History at the University of Manitoba.

In the announcement of the winners of the awards, by Donald Gray, the Publicity Director of the Foundation, appears the following:

"Each winner receives \$1500 plus family allowances, plus full costs of a year's graduate tuition at any university in the United States or Canada.

"The winners named today were nominated by faculty members. They were selected after being interviewed by regional committees of educators, with subsequent approval and additions by a national committee at the Foundation's headquarters in Princeton. A thousand campus representatives, appointed by the Foundation,

acted as "talent scouts" in helping to recruit the promising students and starting them on the road to college teaching careers.

Dr. Hans Rosenhaupt, National Director of the Wilson Fellowship Foundation, stressed the fact that candidates are not able to apply directly for the awards but must be nominated by one of their college professors who naturally name only outstanding students."

This is not the first honor received by Donald. Last spring on completing his Fourth Year Arts he received the McLean Scholarship \$200.00, Lord Selkirk Association of Rupertsland Memorial Scholarship \$115. and the Robert Sirluck Scholarship in Canadian History, \$115.00.

Donald intends to take his graduate work in the University of Toronto, studying Canadian History, post World War I.

Donald Swainson is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ingi Swainson of 481 Home St., in Winnipeg.

The Icelandic Canadian extends congratulations.

★

At a conference held in Montreal of the Chemical Institute of Canada, in June last, and attended by about 350 chemists and chemical engineers, the Montreal Medal for outstanding contribution to Canadian chemistry was awarded to Dr. Thorbergur Thorvaldson of Saskatoon, retired Dean of Graduate Studies at the University of Saskatchewan. In his reply the retired Dean said that "little encouragement is offered researchers in fundamental work divorced from all practical considerations."

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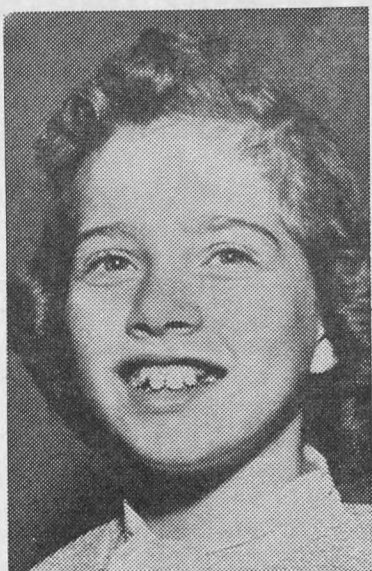
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WINS FOLK SONG SOLO AT FESTIVAL



Patricia Gail Johnson

At this years Manitoba Musical Festival Patricia Gail Johnson was the winner of the Folk Song Solo for girls under 14, and at the same time won the Ladies Orange Benevolent Association Trophy. She sang "Ólafur reið með björgum fram" (Olaf and the Fairy).

Patricia is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Helgi Johnson of 885 Garfield St., Winnipeg. Her father's parents are Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Johnson of Gimli.

★

Mr. and Mrs. Olafur Magnusson of Wynyard, Sask., were honored by friends and neighbors last June on the occasion of their 60th wedding anniversary. They were married June 17, 1899. Mrs. Magnusson is the former Jensina Johnson. They have one son, Walter, who operates the old family farm in the Wynyard district.

Congratulations were sent on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen, Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker, Drummond

Clancy, M.P. for Yorkton, Premier Tommy Douglas of Saskatchewan, and others.

★

Our budding young pianist, Maria Magnusson (see Icelandic Canadian, winter 1959) was one of two accompanists and soloist at the annual choral concert of the Daniel McIntyre Collegiate in February of this year. The Winnipeg Tribune reported that "the young pianist showed she is a musicianly and sensitive pianist."

★

AN EXHIBIT OF "ARTS AND CRAFTS OF ICELAND" SHOWN AT CHICAGO, ILL.

An exhibit of "Arts and Crafts of Iceland" was shown in the Randolph Street corridor of the Chicago Public Library, Chicago, Ill. from January 2nd to 30th, 1960. This exhibit was assembled by Dr. Arni Helgason, Icelandic Consul in Chicago.

The exhibit included reproductions of paintings by artists of Iceland, original wood carvings, silverware, jewelry, ceramics, articles of dress and a small collection of Icelandic postage stamps. The said reproductions of paintings were displayed on the walls and the other exhibits in glass showcases.

The reproductions of paintings were entitled "Blóm", "Hjaltastaðarblóm", and "Hornafjörður" by Ásgrímur Jónsson; "Sumarnótt", "Stóðhestar" and "Dagrenning við Hornbjarg" by Jón Stefánsson; "Það er gaman að lifa" and "Ísland er það lag" by Jóhannes S. Kjarval; "Gamla búðin" by Gunnlaugur Scheving; "Telpur í boltaleik" by Thorvaldur Skúlason; "Vivillfell úr Kópavogi" by Jón Engilberts; "Leysing" by Svavar Guðnason; "Hekla" by Thorarinn Thorláksson; and "Sjöundi dagur í Paradís" by Guðmundur Thorsteinsson. The prints of the paintings

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The silverware consisted mostly of spoons, which in design and workmanship showed basic Scandinavian culture. Among the spoons were "Jóla-skeiðar" 1951-58.

The original word carvings consisted in form of a few small human figures, carved by Halldór Einarsson. They are expertly done and show fine lines and proportions.

The jewelry shown was of exquisite design and quality; the various items of ceramics were also of fine design and good quality; and the articles of dress of high quality and pattern, especially the ladies' costume which was mounted on a wax figure.

The small collection of Icelandic postage stamps included among others the "Eiderdown duck and male eider", "Salmon", "Icelandic wild flowers", "Hydroelectric station near Reykjavik", "Islands of the south of Iceland", "Highest mountain in Iceland, 6950 ft. Öräfajökull" and "Air mail stamp". Also shown were memorial coins issued in 1930 on the occasion of the millennial anniversary of the Althing, Iceland's parliament.

Within the glass showcases were also placed cards printed in capital letters, which among other things, contained the following information: — "Silversmithing has always been popular in Iceland and all the work shows a basic Scandinavian culture. Early spoons were made of cattle horn but the form remained the same when silver came into use." "Early Scribe. Writing in the Icelandic language dates back to the beginning of the 12th Century. Arni Thorgilsson, the learned

(1067-1148) wrote a history of Iceland about 1120. The writing of the Eddas and sagas followed." "Iceland was settled by people from Norway in the 9th and early part of the 10th Century. Ingolfur Arnarson, the first settler arrived in 874 A.D. and established his home where Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, is located." "Christianity was adopted in Iceland in the year 1000. The first bishop was elected and a bishopric established in 1056."

On a wall were hung several photographs of the countryside, towns, and mountains of Iceland. There was also a large map of the country, a chart showing sketches of the various fishes that inhabit the seas around the island, and some printed matter containing pertinent information about the country.

The said exhibits were well planned and arranged, and very attractive, interesting and instructive.

—Egill Anderson



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